

**CITY OF SEATTLE  
ANALYSIS AND DECISION OF THE DIRECTOR  
OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DESIGN, CONSTRUCTION AND LAND USE**

Application Number: N/A

Applicant Name: Department of Design, Construction and Land Use

Location of Proposal: The First Hill Urban Village is generally bounded by Interstate 5 to the west, Union Street to the north, Broadway to the east, and Yesler Way to the south.

**SUMMARY OF PROPOSED ACTION**

This non-project action consists of proposed amendments to the Land Use Code

- reducing the minimum off-street parking quantity requirement under SMC 23.54.015 for multifamily uses in the First Hill Urban Village to one parking space per unit,
- modifying the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) parking policies to be consistent with the proposed parking amendments above, eliminating the use of SEPA authority to require more parking than required by the Land Use Code. This provision would apply only to residential uses, and
- modifying open space requirements for multifamily uses in commercial zones to be comparable to open space requirements in Midrise residential zones.

The following approvals are required:

SEPA – Environmental Determination – Chapter 25.05, Seattle Municipal Code.

**SEPA DETERMINATION:** ☐ Exempt      ☒ DNS      ☐ EIS

☐ DNS with conditions

☐ DNS involving non-exempt grading or demolitions or involving another agency with jurisdiction.

**BACKGROUND**

**Site and Vicinity Description**

The entire First Hill Urban Village is urbanized with residential, commercial, institutional, transportation and other uses typically found in a dense mixed-use community. The existing land use pattern consists of a varied mix of large and small multifamily and mixed-use structures. Commercial corridors are concentrated along Madison Street, James Street, and parts of

Broadway. Much of the neighborhood's 225 acres is located within Major Institution Overlay. The rest is zoned Highrise, Midrise, Neighborhood Commercial 3-65' or Lowrise 3. A fully developed urban infrastructure serves the entire area including paved streets, sidewalks, transit system and utilities.

Proposal Description (based on the draft legislation)

- Revise the minimum residential parking requirement for multifamily uses in the First Hill Urban Center Village to one parking space per dwelling unit.
- Modify the City's State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA) parking policies, to be consistent with the proposed parking amendments above, eliminating the use of SEPA authority to require more parking than required by the Land Use Code. This provision would apply only to residential uses.
- Modifying open space requirements for multifamily uses in commercial zones to be comparable to open space requirements in Midrise residential zones. The open space development standards would differ from the Midrise standards in that all the open space could be provided above ground. The proposal would modify the open space quantity requirements as follows;
  - A minimum of twenty-five (25) percent of the lot area shall be provided as usable open space, except that in no case shall the open space requirement be greater than three hundred (300) square feet per unit.

The Seattle City Council may choose to amend the proposal by further reducing the minimum parking requirement for multifamily uses in the First Hill Urban Village, or by modifying the regulation of parking in some other way. The proposed modification of open space requirements in commercial zones in the First Hill Urban Village was the subject of a SEPA analysis resulting in a determination of non-significance published on November 28, 2002.

Public Process

The proposed amendments support First Hill Neighborhood Plan goals with regard to affordable housing and creating a neighborhood where residents can live, work and play without needing to rely a car, and they do not conflict with neighborhood planning goals with respect to parking and transportation.

The proposed amendments build on the land use policy and regulatory framework established by the City's Comprehensive Plan, *Toward a Sustainable Seattle, a Plan for Managing Growth 1994-2014*, last amended in 2002. That framework includes the general land use pattern, the designation of urban centers and urban villages, and specific household and job growth targets for each of those centers and villages. At the time the Comprehensive Plan was adopted, the effects of its intended growth patterns, including the household and job targets, were analyzed in an environmental impact statement (EIS).

Amendments to the Land Use Code are Type V (Legislative) Land Use Decisions, which require a public hearing before Council. Notice of the Council hearing is provided at least 30 days prior the hearing in the following manner: inclusion in the General Mailed Release (GMR), posting in the Department, and publication in the City's official newspaper. Public testimony will be taken at the hearing. In addition, a DCLU Director's Report and copies of the proposed legislation will be available for public review and comment at the Public Resource Center and on the Department's Web site during the 30-day review period.

## ANALYSIS – SEPA

The initial disclosure of the potential impacts from this project was made in the environmental checklist submitted by the applicant dated July 3, 2003. The information contained in the checklist, supplemental information provided by the applicant (the Draft Director's Report dated June 23, 2003), and the experience of the lead agency with review of similar legislation form the basis for this analysis and decision.

The SEPA Overview Policy (SMC 25.05.665 D) clarifies the relationship between codes, policies, and environmental review. Specific policies for each element of the environment, certain neighborhood plans and other policies explicitly referenced may serve as the basis for exercising substantive SEPA authority.

### Short-term Impacts

As a non-project action, the proposed amendments will not have any short-term impacts on the environment. Future development affected by this legislation and subject to SEPA will be required to address short-term and long-term impacts on the environment.

### Long-Term Impacts

**The proposal to modify the minimum off-street parking quantity requirement to one space per unit** is not expected to result in adverse transportation impacts. The First Hill Urban Village is well serviced by transit, close to large employment centers and is located in a dense urban environment.

Minimum Code parking requirements are intended to reflect minimum anticipated parking demand. Based on data from the 2000 Census, the average number of vehicles available per household is only 0.56 vehicles per household. Average number of vehicles owned per household is actually less than the average available per household so the vehicles available is a more conservative statistic. The higher prevalence of smaller housing units occupied by one- or two-person households largely explains the lower number of vehicles available per household on First Hill and other Center City neighborhoods compared to the rest of the city. A parking study prepared in 1998 by Heffron Transportation confirms this phenomenon in terms of parking demand rather than vehicle availability. As a result of the lower demand for parking, off-street parking quantity regulations for other Center city neighborhoods, such as Pike/Pine and Cascade

have been modified to allow 1 space per unit. Additionally, in Downtown there is no residential off-street parking requirement.

The proposed parking requirement is expected to meet the residential parking demand in the neighborhood. No significant on-street spillover parking impacts are expected. Due to parking demand trends in the neighborhood and to its limited applicability to the First Hill Urban Village, this proposal is not expected to result in adverse impacts.

**The proposal to modify SEPA parking policies** by eliminating SEPA authority within the First Hill Urban Village to require more parking than the minimum required is not expected to generate adverse impacts. The minimum required off-street parking quantity is expected to capture all the parking demand; therefore, SEPA authority to mitigate parking impacts by requiring additional parking is not necessary. Additionally, this particular conditioning authority is rarely utilized in that other mitigation methods, such as, sufficient bicycle parking, transit subsidies or design solutions are more common mitigations. These other mitigations for parking impact will still be available to decision makers when projects subject to SEPA are reviewed. No adverse impacts are expected as a result of implementing this proposal.

**The proposal to modify open space requirements** in commercial zones in the First Hill Urban Village is not expected to generate any adverse impacts. The proposal could reduce the quantity of open space provided in private developments in that the quantity will be calculated by using lot area and not the amount of residential floor area. Larger projects with more dwelling units would likely provide less open space as calculated on a per unit basis. Open space will still be a requirement of development so that residents will continue to be provided with opportunities to interact with others and experience repose and recreation. No adverse impacts are expected as a result of this proposal.

#### **DECISION - SEPA**

[X] Determination of Non-Significance. This proposal has been determined to not have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is not required under RCW 43.21C.030.(2)(c).

[ ] Determination of Significance. This proposal has or may have a significant adverse impact upon the environment. An EIS is required under RCW 43.21C.030(2)(c).

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Jess Harris, Land Use Planner  
Department of Design, Construction and Land Use

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